

Family Support Services Advisory Council (FSSAC)
September 14, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Members Attending:

Laura McKee, Bonnie Ramage, RaLea Harbrige, Melanie Bush, Daylinda Radley, Karen Thornton, Hollin Buck, David Munson, Alexis Marthaller, Catherine Murphy, Patty Butler, Caitlyn Patera, Laura Christiaens, Karen Shevlin, Kathy Rich, Rebecca Richards

Members Absent:

Sarah Goldsmith, Dr Christine Lux, Danielle McCarthy, Jeannie Keller, Erin Kintop, Jean Price

Guests:

Carol Clayton-Bye, Brooke Bartholomew, Kathy Keel, Kalli Decker, Kari Hoover, Teri Lilletvedt, James Parker

Chairperson Laura McKee called the meeting to order with introductions of Members and Guests. Bonnie Ramage, Region 3 Parent Representative, shared her family story.

DaSy Conference Updates:

Laura McKee attended the 2018 Improving Data, Improving Outcomes Conference and State Interagency Coordinating Councils Meeting in Virginia in early August. Each state or territory receiving Part C of IDEA grant funds must have an Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) appointed by the Governor of the state or territory. Montana named its Council the Family Support Services Advisory Council (FSSAC) back in the late 80's or early 90's.

Laura's key takeaways:

Make the ICC/FSSAC both meaningful and intentional for all members of the Council. Find out why an individual is on the Council. Be clear that a representative's part on the ICC/FSSAC is not a personal part but rather a stakeholder in a specific role of representation. For example, Hollin Buck and David Munson do not represent specifically the Child Development Center and Billings School District #2 Early Childhood Intervention (Part C Program agencies respectively); rather, they represent the regional contractors in the State doing business as providers of the Part C Program in their catchment areas. Dr Lux does not represent Montana State University specifically but does represent the role of Personnel Preparation from an institute of higher learning. The ICC/FSSAC "consists of both public and private individuals who by virtue of their position, interest and training can contribute to the quality of services provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families." The ICC/FSSAC role is to assist and advise MT's Department of Health and Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Program, as part of the stakeholder group represented. The Council's role is not one of advocacy. The State's lobbying rules apply to the FSSAC.

From the Supporting Emerging Family Leaders breakout session:

Each contractor should be informing families about leadership, advocacy, and skill-building opportunities and encouraging those who are interested to participate. To begin, the groundwork must be in place. Why join the FSSAC? What are the expectations for membership? What does the Council want to learn from them? What is the family member

comfortable with committing to? Ultimately, everyone on the Council has a role in Parent Support.

Laura discovered that Montana embedded family leadership into the most recent Part C Program Request for Proposal process wherein five regional contractors were chosen. Within contractual obligations: *Families are provided support to ensure equitable representation on the State Interagency Council also known as the Family Support Services Advisory Council and local and State committees/work groups.* Laura led discussion around this topic.

Each FSSAC meeting should include:

Reporting on the State-wide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and the State's identified Measurable Results (SiMR). Trainings or presentations and a family presentation should be included as well. Montana already embedded family presentations into each meeting. Every meeting follows the Federal and State bylaws noting that Montana is working on this beginning with name tents for members. Laura noted the bylaws state "there can be no substitutions for Council members at meetings, except for parent representatives." Each meeting includes a public-address time and non-members speak during that time. Montana is working toward improvement in this realm. Finally, *assure that members reporting to the Council on family and agency issues at each meeting select and share concise information on those issues and other important topics for inclusion in the minutes.*

Family Outcomes Survey Results:

Laura asked the contractors present if family survey results data are shared with parents or family members. She pondered if the results should be available on each individual contractor's website and link to the State's website where the State's results are identified. Are the results used for change? Should a script be developed to ensure state-wide understanding and consistency? Are surveys presented as meaningful? Wendy will bring a data picture of Family Outcomes Survey Results to the next FSSAC meeting for discussion.

Fiscal:

Does the FSSAC know the State's budget or finances for Part C? Each meeting should include a fiscal presentation. Laura noted Part C grant funds are for specific coordination of services and should be used only as the payor of last resort.

Laura concluded her update with thanks and an update on Quinn – Shark Lover, 5th grader, Lego Master Builder, You Tube Watcher, Dancer, Four-Wheeler Driver, and all around happiest boy ever. Without early intervention services and supports, he would not be where he is today!

PLUK Family Training:

Parent Advocacy Group Representative, Rebecca Richards, described *Serving on Groups* training including a brief review of the guidebook. Access to the guidebook:

<http://www.servingongroups.org/guidebook>. The training and guide were developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction under the U S Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). It applies to all decision-making groups, not just in education or specifically to one state. Information found on the website: "*Serving on Groups* is

intended to be a useful tool for anyone who is currently serving, or wants to serve, on a decision-making group. This can include parents, students, educators, administrators, and community members. It was researched, developed, and written collaboratively by a broad stakeholder group of statewide agencies, school representatives and family members across Wisconsin. The result is a guide that focuses on a specific skill set using research-based strategies while being broadly applicable to a diverse audience for a more effective and robust decision-making group.” The resource was published by the WI Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support (WI FACETS). After discussion, the FSSAC agreed to participate in an overview version of the training led by Rebecca (qualified trainer of this curriculum) in January before each regional contractor or other Council members request the provision of the training to their specific stakeholder group. FSSAC funds will be used to purchase the guidebook for FSSAC members.

Montana Milestones/Part C of IDEA Early Intervention Program Fiscal Update:

Part C Coordinator Wendy Studt presented “Let’s Find Out About...Where do Montana Milestones Part C Early Intervention Program Dollars Come From and Go To?”

Montana identifies three cash funding streams: the Part C grant, the State’s General Fund dollars, and the State’s Special Funds (tobacco settlement funds); the latter two for Maintenance of Effort (MOE). Additionally, contractors assure the use of public or private insurance for specialized services delivered by qualified personnel before the use of Part C funds (payor of last resort) through Montana’s Systems of Payments as required by OSEP. Part C grant funds are based upon a state’s population figures (Federal Fiscal Year 2017: \$2,247,675). Montana’s MOE for Federal Fiscal Year 2017 including State General Fund dollars (\$2,271,667) and State Special Funds (\$600,000) totaled \$2,871,667. MOE must be maintained at the current funding level (\$2,871,667) unless the following justifications are met:

- ✓ A decrease in the number of infants and toddlers who are eligible to receive early intervention services; and unusually large amounts of funds expended for such long-term purposes as the acquisition of equipment and the construction of facilities.

Montana applies for the Part C grant funds annually each April. The application includes a description of how the Part C funds will be used (positions, Interagency Coordinating Council, Maintenance and Implementation activities, and Direct Services) and describes the policies, procedures, methods, and descriptions of how Montana applies the Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act and the Part C Regulations. Director Hogan signs the application; thereby, providing assurance that Montana does, indeed, apply all federal laws, rules and regulations when using Part C grant funds and MOE funds. Her assurance is based upon annual monitoring of each contractor for both compliance with the requirements and their results providing the Program. The State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) is due each February outlining Montana’s overall compliance and results as well as the State-wide Systemic Improvement Plan results due each March.

Montana’s original budget for the use of Part C and MOE funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018) was impacted by the State’s fiscal crisis impacting the

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Department's General Fund allocation and the singular rate per enrolled infant or toddler in Part C for seven regional contractors: \$545.21 monthly.

Efforts to adhere to the available funds budget during the remainder of FFY 2017 included contracts through June 30, 2019 with five regional contractors with tiered rates based upon targeted Child Counts per geographical region and actual number of infants or toddlers enrolled:

70% - 79% of targeted Child Count:	\$457.55 per infant or toddler per month
80% - 94% of targeted Child Count:	\$467.09 per infant or toddler per month
95% - 99% of targeted Child Count:	\$476.62 per infant or toddler per month
100% - 109% of targeted Child Count:	\$476.62 per infant or toddler per month
110% - 116% of targeted Child Count:	\$432.53 per infant or toddler per month
≥ 117% of targeted Child Count:	\$455.41

The MOE funds were maintained as Montana did not meet the applicable justifications to decrease MOE.

The funds paid to the contractors for direct Part C services through June 30, 2018 totaled \$4,415,812 (one outstanding invoice not included in the total = \$72,866) and a shortfall was identified in the original budget for positions, Interagency Coordinating Council, Maintenance and Implementation activities. Therefore, for FFY 2017, the Department did not fund Professional Development, the Central Directory, and reduced funding for administrative positions and portions of salaries represented by doing work for the Part C Program through unfilled vacancies throughout the Developmental Disabilities Program. Additionally, the indirect costs allocation percentage from the Part C grant funds was reduced for FFY 2018. Montana's proposed budget for FFY 2018 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019) for Part C grant funds (\$2,301,533) and State MOE funds (\$2,871,667) allocates:

- ✓ 84% of total available funds for Direct Services contracts with five regional contractors (\$4,345,488);
- ✓ 3% for the lead agency position(s) (\$155,196);
- ✓ 9% for maintenance and implementation activities (includes FSSAC) (\$465,588), and
- ✓ 4% for indirect costs (\$206,928).

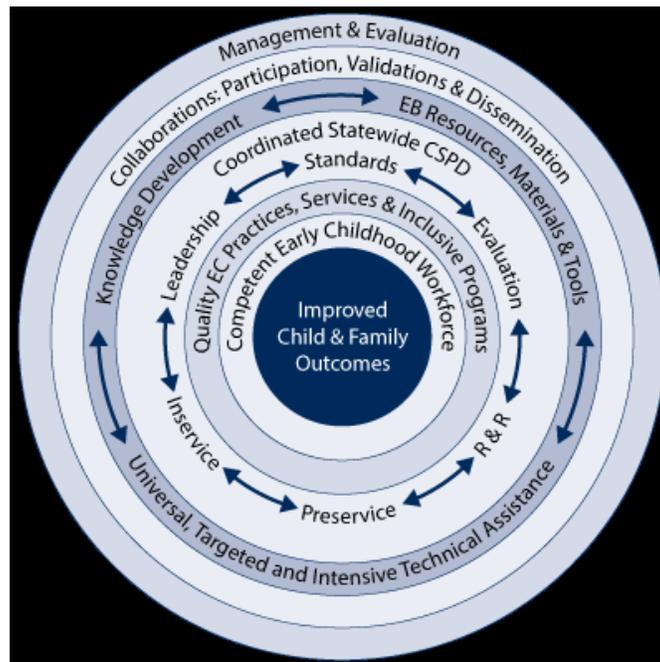
Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB) Educational Opportunity – SKI-HI Curriculum: Carol Clayton-Bye presented information about a professional development opportunity MSDB wishes to provide for early intervention service providers including Family Support Specialists. Cathy Jury of MSDB is professionally certified to bring this training to individuals. SKI-HI is a family-centered program for infants and young children with hearing loss. The curriculum includes friendly, easy to use topics for families with accompanying visuals, handouts, and activity sheets shared in the family's natural environment. Cathy provided this 21-hour training onsite at MSDB (providing housing and food) in Great Falls for early childhood educators, teachers, and special education teachers and received rave reviews. For more information regarding this professional development opportunity, please contact Cathy Jury at MSDB using the following link: <https://msdb.mt.gov/outreach/index.html>.

Informing Families About Data:

Laura shared a video, “The Story of Data: An Early Childhood Tale” found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a33rDTGfQ7M>. The video is brief (6 minutes) and shows how data inform early intervention decisions for a baby with disabilities. The video also illustrates how secure data are combined at the local, state, and national levels to help leaders make informed decisions that support the needs of children with disabilities and their families. How can this video or the content of the video be used to engage families in the multiple levels of decision-making processes that rely upon data to inform decisions? Engaging families with data is an improvement strategy in the State-wide Systemic Improvement Plan as well as a contractual obligation for regional contractors.

Montana’s SSIP and SiMR:

Wendy presented on Montana’s State-wide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR). The U S Department of Education implemented a revised accountability system – Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) - which emphasized improving child outcomes in 2013. At that time, states and territories were required to develop a multi-phase state-wide systemic improvement plan focusing on results and drive innovation in the use of evidence-based practices leading to improved results for children. States and territories identified a statement of the result(s) the state or territory intends to achieve through implementation of the SSIP referred to as the “SiMR” – State identified Measurable Result.



Montana identified improving the positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) for infants and toddlers with disabilities enrolled in Montana Milestones Part C of IDEA Early Intervention Program. Montana recognized early social emotional skills are related to how socially, emotionally, academically and professionally skilled we are later in life. Social-emotional skills are the foundation for life and of vital importance to children of all abilities.

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Montana's Theory of Action provides a continuous improvement process framework focused upon five overarching improvement components expected to lead to improved social-emotional outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families:

- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Assessment practices
- ✓ Family engagement and involvement
- ✓ Monitoring and accountability

Each component is broken down into specific strategies that if implemented with fidelity, monitored, and evaluated, are expected to positively impact social-emotional outcomes for children enrolled in Part C of IDEA:

- ✓ The professional development system, Montana Milestones/Montana State University online learning platform is a sustainable system of professional development targeting Family Support Specialists and other early intervention personnel with emphasis upon Montana's identified evidence-based practices.
- ✓ The comprehensive definition of Montana Milestones evidence-based approaches to early intervention is shared by stakeholders, families, and regional contractors. This includes Coaching, Routines-based Early Intervention, and the Pyramid Model for supporting social-emotional competence in infants and young children.
- ✓ The appropriate functional assessment methods are used to identify social-emotional needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families leading to successful intervention strategies to enhance families' abilities.
- ✓ Families are engaged and involved in child outcomes data. They use the data to make informed decisions regarding evidence-based practices, policies and procedures, and programmatic choices.
- ✓ The Part C Coordinator oversees state-wide quality improvement and assurance systems leading to results-driven accountability.

Montana's current target: of the infants and toddlers entering the Part C of IDEA Program below age expectations, 65% will show substantial gains in social-emotional development by the time they turn 3 or exit the program. This is measured by the Child Outcomes Summary Process.

Guests in attendance were provided opportunity for public comment.

Laura closed the meeting requesting each Council member to reflect upon any "Aha's" revealed during the meeting.

Next meeting date (including *Serving on Groups* training provided by Rebecca Richards):

Thursday, January 10 at 1:00 to 5:00 and Friday, January 11 at 8:00 to 3:30. Location to be determined.

In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be postponed to Thursday, January 24 at 1:00 to 5:00 and Friday, January 25 at 8:00 to 3:30.

Suggestions for agenda items for the January meeting be submitted to Chair Laura McKee at lmckee@mt.gov or Wendy Studt at wstudt@mt.gov.

Meeting adjourned.